

## Newsletter

### Creating Safer Space

November 2024



Dear All,

We are delighted to announce our new *Creating Safer Space* Working Paper, which explores intersectionality, vulnerability and self-protection in the context of urban conflict in Medellín, Colombia.

In other news from Colombia, we are delighted to share a series of short films and podcasts that explore the protective power of the arts, and news of an exhibition that uses photoembroidery to explore water conflicts.

Finally, please join us for our next *Creating Safer Space* research café, which takes place **tomorrow**. Is a society without policing & co. possible? We will discuss the idea of Abolition, its links to Unarmed Civilian Protection, and avenues for future debate.

*Creating Safer Space* is an international research network, which aims to understand and support unarmed civilian protection and self-protection amidst violent conflict.

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### New *Creating Safer Space* Working Paper on Colombia

The *Creating Safer Space* network has published a new working paper, [‘Interseccionalidad, vulneraciones y autoprotección en el contexto del conflicto armado urbano en Medellín, 2022-2024’](#). It is written by Beatriz Elena Arias López, Laura Jiménez Ospina, Sandra Benítez Diosa, Adriana María Diosa Colorado and Giovanni Pérez. The working paper is currently only available in Spanish, but an English translation will be available soon.

The working paper presents the findings of the *Creating Safer Space* project, [‘Art that Protects: Networks as strategies for self-protection in the context of urban conflict in the city of Medellín, 2023’](#).

The working paper explores the role of art as a powerful form of self-protection in the context of social and armed conflict in Medellín, Colombia. Using an intersectional lens, it analyses the initiatives of fifteen community-based artistic and cultural organizations that have worked in the context of this urban conflict. By unpacking the categories of sex-gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, and cosmovision in the art that protects, the authors contribute to a deeper understanding, among others, of the role of marginalized people in their communities' safety; the socioeconomic precarity of community-based artistic organisations; the role of art in creating spaces for reflection of hidden, naturalised violences such as structural racism; and the importance of youth initiatives.



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## Creating Safer Space Research Café – UCP and Abolition

At the next *Creating Safer Space* Research Café, we will discuss the idea of abolition, how this debate may be linked to UCP, and potential avenues for future collaboration between abolition researchers and UCP researchers.

Dr Raquel da Silva (University of Coimbra) and Prof Nerve Macaspac (City University of New York) will present their research on the topic and introduce the session.

Raquel is interested in discussions surrounding the imperative to address instances of police violence. She is particularly keen on exploring reconceptualizations of the understanding of security and its governance in relation to the state policing apparatus by exploring how community-led intersectional politics of care can mitigate structural conditions of violence. Nerve's research explores a relational framework that puts practices of unarmed community self-protection in dialogue with the scholarship of "abolition geography" in rethinking how everyday life might be lived and organized—socially and spatially—that does not rely upon institutions that reproduce spaces of violence.

12.30 – 1.30 pm UTC on **Thursday 14 November - TOMORROW**

Please use a [timezone converter](#) to check your local time.

The session will be held in English and Spanish with simultaneous translation.

Please register for this online Zoom event here:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwof-mgrzkiHtPR8KDHgiw4LnnPgg6uN\\_S9](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwof-mgrzkiHtPR8KDHgiw4LnnPgg6uN_S9)

The aim of the *Creating Safer Space* Research Cafés is to enable people in different parts of the world to exchange knowledge and to help build a community of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) researchers and practitioners.

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## News from *Creating Safer Space* Projects



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Water conflicts, violations and forms of self-protection: A multi-case study in Eastern Antioquia, Colombia](#)' has organised a photo embroidery exhibition, which delves into the strategies of self-protection employed by communities in response to conflicts impacting the Paloma, Dormilón, and Santo Domingo rivers in Colombia. Local residents use embroidery and photography to narrate challenges associated with the arrival of small hydroelectric plants, mining activities, mass tourism, pressure from riverside real estate development, deforestation, and pollution. Alongside these stories of struggle, they reveal how they have nonviolently protected themselves against these threats. More information is available [here](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Art that Protects: Networks as strategies for self-protection in the context of urban conflict in the city of Medellín](#)' has published a series of short films and podcasts. The 5 short films analyse how beliefs, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender can simultaneously act as sources of vulnerability and self-protection. The 3 podcasts examine how art has served as a self-protection strategy over the last forty years and as a tool for networking. The films and podcasts can be accessed online [here](#), along with a full report.

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## External News

The **Heinrich Böll Foundation** is organising an online [Panel Event on Transnational Organized Crime and the Fight against Climate Change](#) on Friday 14 November. One of the Panellists is Prof. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Principal Investigator of the *Creating Safer Space* network.

**Search for Common Ground** is relaunching the [SHE WINS Rapid Response Fund](#), with grants for women's networks and local women's groups in 78 countries.

The **Global Protection Cluster** is hosting a Protection Conversation on [Optimizing Armed Actor Engagement for Protection Outcomes](#) on 18 November.

**ODI Global** has released a new report on [Reducing violence and strengthening the protection of civilians through community dialogue with armed actors](#).

**ODI Global** has released a briefing paper on [Reducing violence and strengthening the protection of civilians: debunking assumptions](#).

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